



THE BACKPACK

BE PREPARED FOR THE JOURNEY



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THE NAVIGATORS OF NEW ZEALAND**

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FOR THE JOURNEY.



INTRODUCTION

Life is a journey...

Yes, it is a well-worn cliché, but before rolling your eyes, let's suspend judgment and imagine for a moment that life really *is* a journey. What would you need for the trip?

Like any good trip, you'd want to know where you are going, you'd want some travelling companions to go with you, and you'd want to have the right skills and equipment to get you there safely. And you would carry some of these things in a *backpack*.

In our walk with Jesus through this life, there are some things that we will find helpful to *know* and to be able to *do*. The Navigator Backpack is a series of short studies addressing some of these things on this journey. The Backpack is divided into 3 sections: 1. Things We Need to Know, 2. Things to Help Us Relate to God & 3. Things to Help Us Relate to Others.



SCOPE



WHAT IS IN THE BACKPACK?

SECTION

THINGS WE NEED TO KNOW.

1

As the name suggests, this section of The Backpack deals with the *things we need to know*. What is the author of our journey – God – like? Where have we come from? Where are we headed? What sort of journey is this? How should we travel? What sort of travellers should we be?

Section One is divided into three parts, with each part having a number of short studies in it. Here are the main three parts: 1. What is God Like? 2. What God is doing – the Good News of Jesus & 3. What we are called to Do.

SECTION

THINGS TO HELP US RELATE TO GOD.

2

This section helps us focus on things we can do that will help us relate to God. We look at how the Holy Spirit helps us; we also explore ways of praying and of getting into the Bible. These studies have a more practical bent to them and they include a variety of time proven resources that we encourage you to try. They are not so much designed to bring about more reflection and knowledge but rather they are designed to bring about more action!

Section Two is also divided into three parts, with each part having a number of short studies in it. Here are the main three parts: 1. The Holy Spirit 2. Prayer & 3. The Bible

SECTION

THINGS TO HELP US RELATE TO OTHERS.

3

Section Three focuses on strengthening how we relate with others. On this faith journey we will encounter other travellers. Some have yet to start this journey, others may be a few steps behind us in the journey, while others may be further ahead of us. We can help some of these people and some of them can help us. To keep us all moving forward we will look at key areas of sharing our faith, discipling or mentoring another person and the significance of how we travel together in community. Section Three is divided into three parts, with each part having a number of short studies in it. Here are the three main parts: 1. Sharing Our Faith 2. Mentoring & 3. Community

The studies in The Backpack are not everything you need to know for the journey. After all, a backpack is not a caravan or a holiday home – it's just a backpack. Neither are these studies designed to get you there alone. They are best used when worked through with someone else...for example, a person who has been on the journey a little bit longer who is now helping a newer traveller who is now on the way.

So, if you've been on this faith journey a little while, we would like to encourage you to use The Backpack with someone who could benefit from your help. And if you are fairly new to it, go ahead and find an 'experienced traveller' who is farther down the path that you trust and work through it together.

Whatever the case, please give this a go, because this journey is too important to make unprepared.

SECTION THREE: THINGS TO HELP US RELATE TO OTHERS

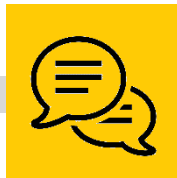
This section focuses on strengthening our relating to others. On this faith journey we will encounter other travellers. Some have yet to start the journey, others are a few steps behind us, while others are further on ahead of us. We can help some of these people, and some of them can help us. To keep us all moving forward, we look at sharing our faith, discipling or mentoring another person, and the significance of how we travel together in community.

Section Three is divided into three parts, with each part having a number of short studies in it. They can be seen below:



SHARING FAITH:

1. Sharing Faith - Now
2. Sharing Faith – Our Presence
3. Sharing Faith – Our Actions
4. Sharing Faith – Our Words from the Bible
5. Sharing Faith – Our Words from Our Lives
6. Summary



MENTORING:

1. Mentoring Basics
2. Mentoring: Three Stories Meet
3. Mentoring: Listening in Three Places
4. Mentoring: Three Key Activities
5. Summary



COMMUNITY:

1. Community – Building the Body
2. The One Another's
3. Giving Generously
4. Small Group Basics
5. Small Groups – Exploring Faith
6. Summary

Each study is 2 pages. Some of these are jam-packed with information and ideas, some of which you won't be able to use immediately. We would encourage you to become aware of everything that is here, and even though you can't implement it all at once, please do at least try something. There is potentially so much to be gained, and so little to be lost. Give it a go!

THINGS TO HELP US RELATE TO OTHERS:

SHARING FAITH



“Very truly I tell you, we speak of what we know, and we testify to what we have seen.” - **John 3:11**

Everybody lives by faith – whether it’s faith in God for eternity or faith in a job, or fame to give you a great life, we all act now with a future in mind, and that requires faith.

This series explores practical ways to help us share our Christian faith with those around us, and because we believe that the Good News is passed from life to life, we look at a number of different ways that we can communicate with others: our words, our actions and our presence. They all make a difference. These studies are not primarily designed to bring about more reflection and knowledge; rather, they are designed to bring about more action! They each consider a different aspect of sharing faith and make some suggestions for you to try.

Please do come to this section with a willingness to try some things. There is potentially so much to be gained, and so little to be lost. Give it a go!

SHARING FAITH STUDIES:

As you seek God through the studies listed below take time before you begin to ask God to reveal himself to you and to give you insight and understanding of His Word.

✓ 1. Sharing Faith - Now

✓ 2. Sharing Faith – Our Presence

✓ 3. Sharing Faith – Our Actions

✓ 4. Sharing Faith – Our Words from the Bible

✓ 5. Sharing Faith – Our Words from Our Lives

✓ 6. Summary



1. SHARING FAITH – NOW

The Pharisees had a narrow view of the command to “love your neighbour” and using their version of logic invented the inverse command to “hate your enemy”. But Jesus flatly disagreed with this. He called his followers to actively seek the best interests of those we don’t like, of those we find obnoxious and selfish, even of those who try to make our lives a misery (see Mat 5:38-46).

"You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbour and hate your enemy.' But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? - **Matthew 5:43-46**

Why should we act this way? Jesus says because you will then be following the example set by your Father in heaven, who gives sunshine and rain to both the good and the evil. Lots of people hate God and rage against him in total defiance. But God is so patient with them. He continues to keep their hearts beating, giving them fun and laughter as well as hard times. In fact, the way God treats those who hate him appears to be no different from the way he treats those who love him. They have the same lot given to them. If we stop to think about it, this seems utterly ridiculous. But this is not bad news to those who love God; rather it is good news to those who rebel against him and who fail him. We often talk about the unconditional love of God. Well, this is what it means. God doesn’t wait to see how evil people like us will respond before he loves us. *He just goes on and does it.* As far as love is concerned, God goes on the offensive: “*For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life*” *John 3:16*

This is the Good News we believe. This is the message the world desperately needs to hear. This is the faith we must share.



THINGS TO DO/QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- If you dared to believe that God could love you so recklessly and unconditionally, how might it make a difference to the way you lived out an average day?
- As you think of one or two of your friends who don’t yet know Christ, how do you think it might make a difference for them to know that God loves them so recklessly and unconditionally?

"Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can anyone preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!"

Romans 10:13-15

- Read the three passages in the box on the right. Why do you think the people in Matthew and Mark's stories respond so differently to the ones in John's story?
- Read John 1:35-50 a few times through. How did news of this Messiah spread and what were the connections of the people who passed it on? (See also John 4:28ff in box below.)
- These early believers were content to bring people to Jesus and let them discover who Jesus was for themselves. As you think about yourself, do you tend to do less (not try to bring people to discover Jesus) or more (attempt to do ALL the convincing that Jesus is God)?

A man with leprosy came to him and begged him on his knees, "If you are willing, you can make me clean." Jesus was indignant. He reached out his hand and touched the man. "I am willing," he said. "Be clean!" Immediately the leprosy left him and he was cleansed. Jesus sent him away at once with a strong warning: "See that you don't tell this to anyone. But go, show yourself to the priest and offer the sacrifices that Moses commanded for your cleansing, as a testimony to them." Instead he went out and began to talk freely, spreading the news. As a result, Jesus could no longer enter a town openly but stayed outside in lonely places. Yet the people still came to him from everywhere. - **Mark 1:40-45**

When he had gone indoors, the blind men came to him, and he asked them, "Do you believe that I am able to do this?" "Yes, Lord," they replied. Then he touched their eyes and said, "According to your faith let it be done to you"; and their sight was restored. Jesus warned them sternly, "See that no one knows about this." But they went out and spread the news about him all over that region. - **Matthew 9:28-31**

Yet at the same time many even among the leaders believed in him. But because of the Pharisees they would not openly acknowledge their faith for fear they would be put out of the synagogue; for they loved human glory more than the glory of God. - **John 12:42-43**



THOUGHT TO FINISH

Hope, belonging, contentment, love, healing, forgiveness, meaning, and purpose. This is the gift of God to us; surely this is good news! And yet, we too easily seem to get lost in the busyness of life and forget – or take for granted – all this goodness. When this happens, it becomes a slippery slope to losing perspective on the cars, clothes, toys, and bank accounts of those around us. At that point, we can more easily resemble the fearful believers in John 12 who felt they had much to lose rather than the free-speaking healed people of Matthew and Mark who laughed and laughed because it must have felt like a dream come true.

Let us not lose our first love; let us work hard to remember. Yes, we still make mistakes and fail, but just think how far we have come... and the only way is up! This is news worth sharing. So let's do it. Now.

Then, leaving her water jar, the woman went back to the town and said to the people, "Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Messiah?" They came out of the town and made their way toward him....

Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony, "He told me everything I ever did." So when the Samaritans came to him, they urged him to stay with them, and he stayed two days.

And because of his words many more became believers. They said to the woman, "We no longer believe just because of what you said; now we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this man really is the Saviour of the world."

- **John 4:28-30, 39-42**



2. SHARING FAITH - OUR PRESENCE

The Good News is passed from life to life. It's not just a matter of words or actions, but our very presence really does make a difference. In this study we have an article (below) which talks about a way of seeing ourselves as *Insiders*. This is followed by an exercise – the relational map – that aims to help us understand where we are and who the Lord might want us to be sharing faith with. Enjoy!



THINGS TO DO/QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

In New Zealand, every Sunday morning more than 80% of our country stays at home; they don't head off to a church. Is God interested in them? Without a doubt! So how will God become "accessible" to this huge majority?

If many people won't go to church to find God, then God chooses to come to people to find them – and one of the key ways he does this is through the *Insider*.

Insiders are not all the same. Some live in the suburbs, others flat in the city; some work for a big corporate, others work looking after kids at home; some play rugby, others play lead guitar in a band. There are as many different types of Insiders as there are people. The critical thing is that each Insider is a Christian who is a message-bearer to their unique group of friends and acquaintances. Because you are *in* the company or *in* the neighbourhood or *in* the mothers' group, you are an *Insider*.

John 1:14 tells us 'The Word became flesh and blood, and moved into the neighbourhood.' (Message version). Jesus was an Insider to the Jewish world of his day – and particularly to the agricultural Galilean Jewish world. God knew that the best way for him to communicate his good news of hope and love for people would be to do it through a message-bearer, whose words and actions and whole life would communicate what God is on about. As an Insider to the world he lived in, that's exactly what Jesus did.

Now God has invited us to join in the task of being Insiders, carrying the message of hope to those around us who we know and love and sometimes hate!

For the most part, the job is very unspectacular and slow. After all, sharing life is not all about bullet points and mission statements; it's about having coffee together, offering a lift into town, joining in birthday parties, collecting mail, listening to relationship hassles. This is the stuff of life. But as we stay close to the God of all Good News, and as we risk sharing ourselves with those around us, then our message of hope is passed from life to life, through our words and actions and presence, to those who need to hear it.

So what? If this is true, then there are a couple of things we need to remember:

First, each one of us has a crucial role as an Insider: we are co-workers with God to a lost generation; no-one is superfluous. He has entrusted us with an important responsibility – to carry the message to those in our immediate world. So we need to take up the challenge and count ourselves in because this work is more important than you could ever imagine.

Secondly, we have already arrived at the place God has sent us to. We just need to stay here! A bit like street lights in the city. If all the street lights were to pick themselves up and head down to the Sports Stadium, that would be great for everyone at the Stadium, but it would leave the city and suburban streets totally in the dark. As Insiders, we cannot afford to abandon the post that is uniquely ours. Our presence really counts!

'When they came to Jesus, they saw the man who had been possessed by the legion of demons, sitting there, dressed and in his right mind... As Jesus was getting into the boat, the man who had been demon-possessed begged to go with him. Jesus did not let him, but said, "Go home to your own people and tell them how much the Lord has done for you" - Mark 5:15-19

"My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one... As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world."

- John 17:15-18

Nevertheless, each of you should live as a believer in whatever situation the Lord has assigned to you, just as God has called you...

Each of you should remain in the situation you were in when God called you...

Brothers and sisters, all of you, as responsible to God, should remain in the situation in which God called you.

- 1 Corinthians 7:17, 20, 24

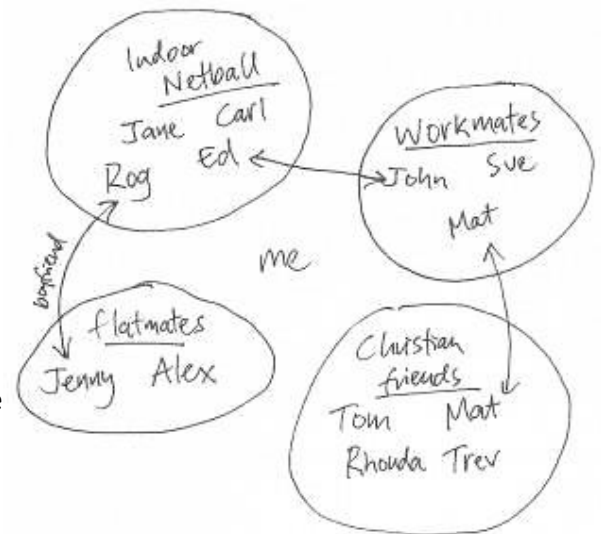


TAKE ACTION

OUR RELATIONAL MAP

Let's get concrete! A good way to see where God has placed you is to draw a map of your world. On a large sheet of paper, write (or diagrammatically draw) the names of people in your world: family, workmates, neighbours, friends, and so on. As you think about who to include in your map, start with the people who are important to you and people you see most frequently, and work your way out from there.

Here's a simplified example ☺➔



On your map, the chances are that there will be a number of different circles that people on your list are a part of (e.g. some are workmates, others family, others sports teammates) but hopefully, there will be some overlap between the circles (e.g. you are in a sports team *with* a workmate).

Now:

1. Note down any faith connections that your friends (who aren't Christians) have with others e.g. your friend may have a mother who is a Christian, or their good friend's girlfriend is a Christian, or they went along to a youth group when they were younger.
2. Note down any Christians who have some connections with your friends who aren't Christians. These would be fellow-Christians who already know your friends or have something in common with them or who you imagine would just get along well together. Use a highlighter pen to identify those you feel you could team with.
3. Relationships often have a seasonal nature, where for a period of time you connect with some of your friends more than others. Prayerfully consider which of your non-believing friends God may want you to be particularly relating to and praying for in this season. Use a different coloured highlighter pen to identify these people. Limit yourself to just a few people, otherwise, you risk spreading yourself too thinly.
4. Identify the next step. As you pray over the relational map you have been creating and the people you believe God would have you be more involved with, ask the Lord to give you a practical idea for what is the next action to take with this person.



TAKE ACTION

- ➔ At least once this week, as you spend time with the Lord, use your relational map as an aid to help you in your prayers for others.
- ➔ Share your relational map with a Christian friend. Having to explain the people and the connections may help you see things differently, and your friend may also have some good practical ideas that you hadn't thought of. Letting them know of your intended action steps can also help you stay accountable to follow through.



3. SHARING FAITH – OUR ACTIONS

Life itself is a risk because there is always the possibility of things going wrong. In fact, throughout the world's history things have continued to go horribly wrong, moving towards total destruction. God set out to put things right through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, but the "saving strategy" God chose to use was a risky one. Jesus' birth in a cowshed to a rural teenage girl set the tone for his life to come – his would be a life without the "comforts" of an overprotective Father in heaven. Instead, Jesus' life was very human, complete with difficulties, dangers, and temptations. The way God chose to redeem the brokenness of the world was through the power of love. This, however, was not a theoretical, well-wishing, good-feeling sort of love. Rather, it was a practical, costly, love-in-action that required the taking of great risks. And just as Jesus did for us, so he calls us to do for others.



THINGS TO DO/QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

LOVE IN ACTION

The apostle Paul worked with many different people to take the good news out into the world. As he went into different cities, he also encouraged the local believers there to work together to see the gospel expand into their worlds.

Read the following passages and note down the type of things Paul asked the believers in Rome and Philippi to do.

- **Rom 12:9-21**
- **Phil 1:27-2:16**
- In the light of these passages, are there one or two specific things that you and your Christian friends can be put into practise as you relate to your friends who aren't Christians?

Each one of us needs to look after the good of the people around us, asking ourselves, "How can I help?" That's exactly what Jesus did. He didn't make it easy for himself by avoiding people's troubles, but waded right in and helped out. "I took on the troubles of the troubled," is the way Scripture puts it.

- **Romans 15:2-3** (*The Message*)

Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth.

- **1 John 3:18**



TAKE ACTION

SECOND THOUGHTS EXERCISE (This exercise is adapted from the work of Liz MacClure.)

- Read the story of the Good Samaritan in the box on the right.
- Each of the three men saw the injured person, but only one took pity and acted. What might be some of the reasons the other two chose not to get involved?
- As you think about you in your world, what might be one or two big barriers that might stop you from seeing the needs around you and taking a second thought to get involved?
- Take a moment now to think again. Ask the Lord to help you answer this question: who in my day-to-day world is there that the Lord would want me to help in some way? Perhaps you can also refer to your relational map to help answer this.

On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?" "What is written in the Law?" he replied. "How do you read it?" He answered, "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind'; and, 'Love your neighbour as yourself.'" "You have answered correctly," Jesus replied. "Do this and you will live." But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbour?" In reply Jesus said: "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he fell into the hands of robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, as he travelled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him. The next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper. 'Look after him,' he said, 'and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.'" "Which of these three do you think was a neighbour to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?" The expert in the law replied, "The one who had mercy on him." Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise."

Luke 10:25-37

- The Samaritan did what he could with what he had on his donkey. As you think about the resources you have (skills, assets, networks of relationships) what might be some of the things you could do to help the person identified above? What is one thing you could do this week?



THOUGHT TO FINISH

- Accountability is our friend! Who can you share this with to help make sure you follow through on what you believe the Lord would have you do?

Each of you has been blessed with one of God's many wonderful gifts to be used in the service of others. So use your gift well.

1 Peter 4:10 CEV



4. SHARING FAITH - OUR WORDS FROM THE BIBLE

"It is no use walking anywhere to preach unless our walking is our preaching."

- St. Francis of Assisi

Many are familiar with a quote attributed to St. Francis of Assisi, *"Preach the gospel at all times and if necessary use words."* While this quote takes hold of our imagination, St. Francis never said these words. The actual quote above captures the heart of the popularized misquote and reminds us that St. Francis lived deeply committed to both the embodiment and proclamation of the gospel.

Before Jesus went up to heaven, he told his followers to wait in Jerusalem for the arrival of God's special gift: the Holy Spirit. So the Apostles waited together, until one day the Spirit arrived, with a sound like a violent wind, and what looked like tongues of fire landing on them. The Apostles immediately went out from there and started speaking to the people in different languages so that all the people could understand them. God's powerful life-giving Spirit had arrived on the scene in a totally new way; this was the beginning of a new era.

And what was the reaction of the people to all this? Not what you might expect. In Acts 2 it tells us that some people were amazed and perplexed, asking 'what does this mean?' while others went into straight-out ridicule, assuming the Apostles had been drinking too much!

"Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: "Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say...let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah." When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?" Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit... about three thousand were added to their number that day. - Acts 2:14-41

The thing is, the Spirit in their midst wasn't self-evident. The people needed someone to explain what was going on. When Peter got up to do that, then they understood and many were moved to believe.

This can help us think about today. God is at work all the time, but as in the days of the Apostles, God's activity in the world – and in us – can be misunderstood, misinterpreted, and go totally over people's heads. For a variety of reasons we can be quite reluctant to talk directly about Jesus and faith, but people need help to connect... the... dots. Like an outline, our words can help bring definition to what is otherwise a blurry picture for people. A little explanation can go a long way.

Just as in the quote attributed to St Francis of Assisi 'Preach the gospel always; when necessary use words' - there was a time for Peter when those words were necessary, and there is a time for us too... so why not try and connect a few dots for someone today.



THINGS TO DO/QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

SHARING FAITH USING WORDS

'Sharing faith using words' has been split into two parts. This first part aims to help us explain the content of our story – what exactly is the Gospel message? The second part aims to help us explain the Gospel from the content of our lives – how God's Good News is at work in us.



TAKE ACTION

GOSPEL ILLUSTRATIONS

To begin, think back to a few specific occasions when someone has asked you about what you believe (note: they may not have stated it as explicitly as ‘what do you believe?’ but this was their intention.)

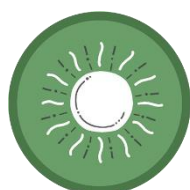
- How easy did you find it to describe what it is you believe?
- Did you describe your faith in the same way on different occasions? Why or why not?
- What do you think are some important beliefs to communicate about your faith in Jesus?

It is ideal to get people into the Bible over an extended period of time with someone, so they can understand the message more fully. However, it is also good to have a succinct description of what it is that you believe.

Over the following pages, we have included four different ways of talking about the Gospel. They are all slightly different, as each illustration emphasises various aspects of the Bible story.

- Read through the four illustrations below.
- Try communicating the gospel message to a Christian friend. You may use one of the illustrations below, you may have your way of doing it, or you may use a combination of the two. Whatever the case, as clearly as possible, practise telling the story of Good News. This is important because we can’t expect to communicate this clearly if we don’t practise.
- Pray that the Lord would allow you to share this soon!

1. MAJOR THEMES IN THE CHRISTIAN STORY



CREATION



FALL



REDEMPTION



FUTURE HOPE

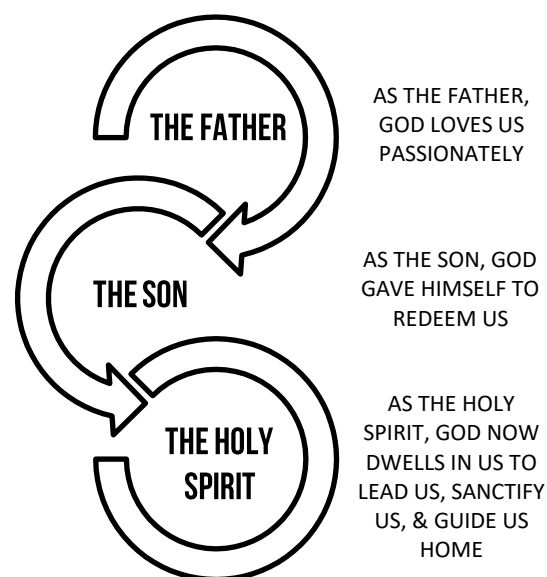
Creation: out of nothing God created beauty, order and meaning. People – all people, not just the ‘important’ ones – were made in God’s likeness and so are infinitely invaluable. And God retains a connection with all creation.

Fall: could the first people trust that the God who told them some things but not everything actually had their best interests at heart? No; they broke trust and they broke the relationship with God. Quickly this brokenness spiralled to affect relationships with self, others and the world. Everything was falling apart.

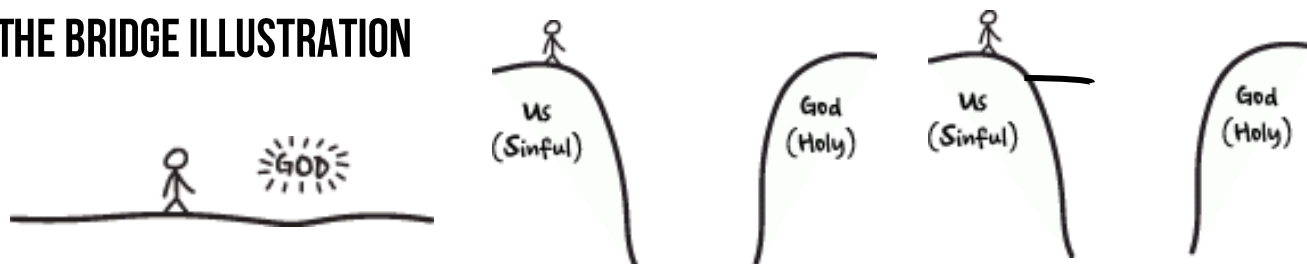
Redemption: this fundamental fall required life-saving surgery. God stepped in, sending Jesus - God himself – to bring about the process of saving, recycling, healing, ransoming, reconciling, re-creating, and bringing peace to us! As we follow this Jesus who lived, died and came back to life, we too find a new life. Jesus changes everything; through him we have hope for the future.

Future hope: the arrival of the coming Day of the Lord. In this new day “He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.” (Rev 21:4)

2. MAJOR CHARACTERS IN THE CHRISTIAN STORY



3. THE BRIDGE ILLUSTRATION



STEP 1:

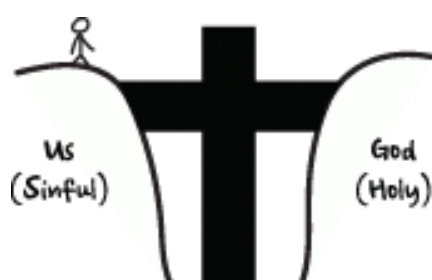
God created us to be in a relationship with Him

STEP 2:

But we turned our backs and hearts on Him, going our own way and ignoring God. This caused a great divide between God and us. The Bible calls this sin. (Romans 3:23)

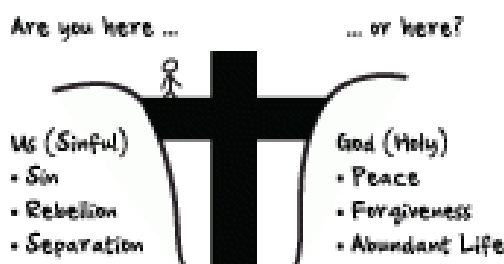
STEP 3:

Mankind tries to bridge that divide through works of their own. However, none of these can bridge the gap because God is pure and holy and can have nothing to do with any wrong. (Romans 6:23a, Romans 8:1, Hebrews 9:27-28)



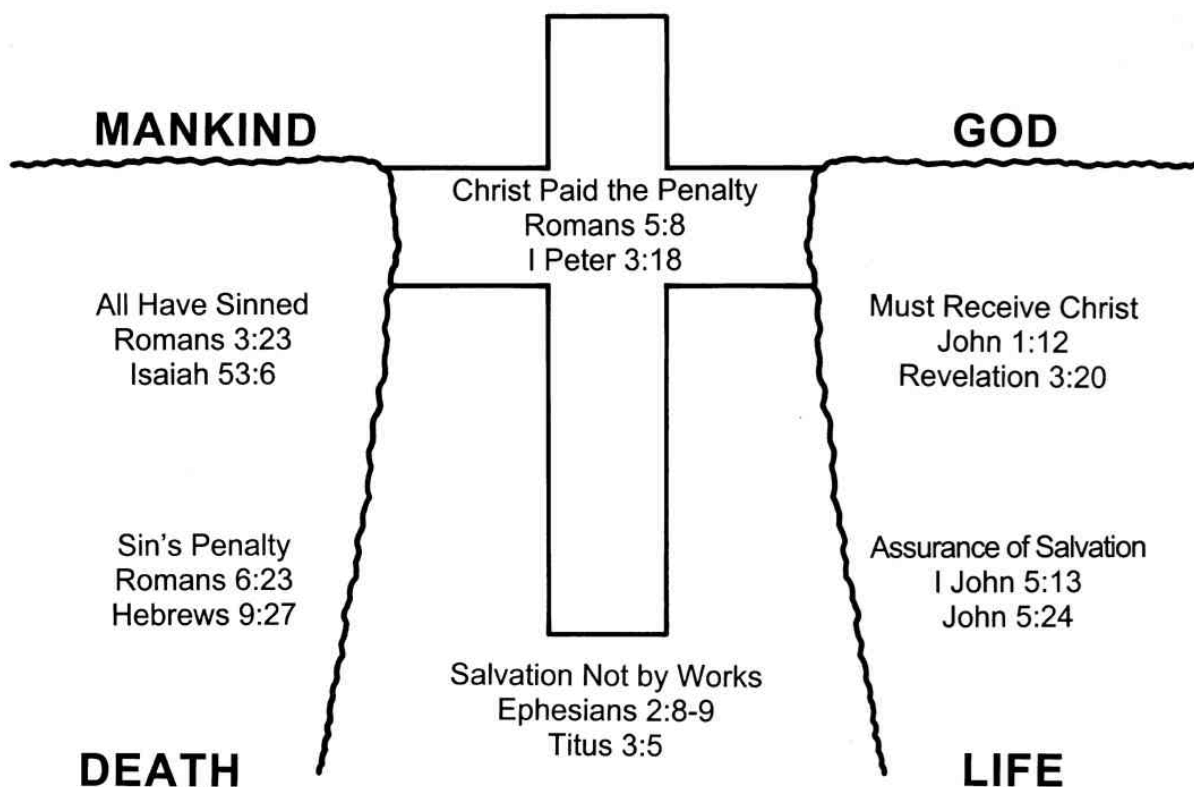
STEP 4:

There is only one way that the divide can be bridged; by Christ dying on the cross. Christ's death is the only way to bridge the gap between people and God, caused by sin. Because he was completely perfect, his death paid the penalty for my rebellion from God (Romans 6:23b, John 14:6, John 10:10, Colossians 1:20-23)



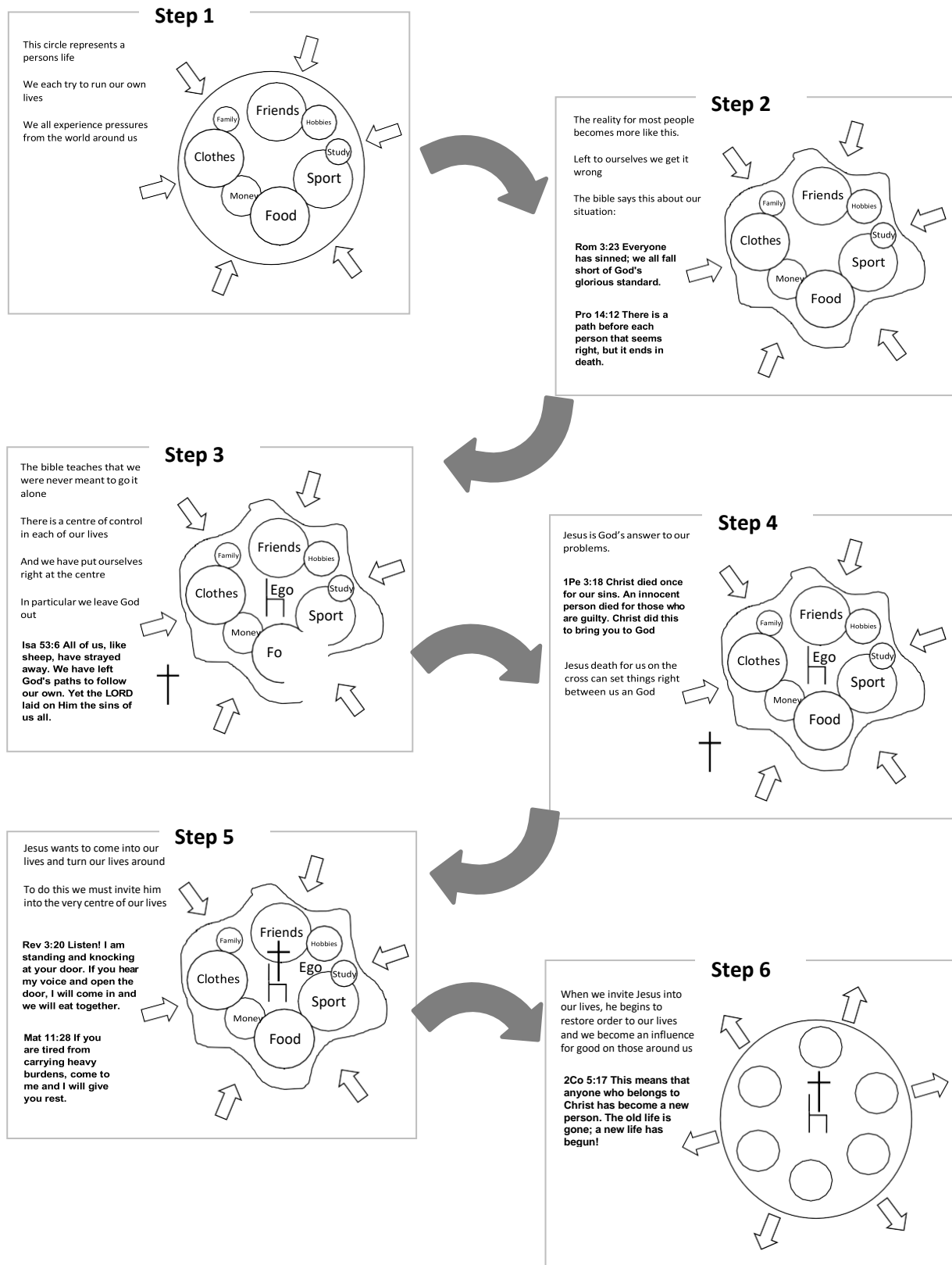
STEP 5:

The only way to cross the bridge is by Faith. We must turn from our life of rebellion and place our trust in what Jesus has done for us. When we place our faith in him – the chasm is erased and we are then reconciled to God and experience a restored relationship with him. (Acts 3:19, Romans 10:9, John 1:2, John 5:24, 1 John 5:11-13)



4. THE CIRCLES ILLUSTRATION

Particularly appropriate for a person who is already aware all is not well with them. It Highlights Jesus' power to heal and renew. Focuses on the need to invite Jesus into the very centre of one's life.





5. SHARING FAITH - OUR WORDS FROM OUR LIVES

'Jesus once said, "*I* am the light of the world" (John 8:12); then on another occasion, he said to his followers, "*You* are the light of the world" (Matthew 5:16). Amazing! We may be comfortable with the first statement, but what about the second? Clearly, God wants to speak, not just through Jesus, nor just through the Bible, but through us! If this is the case, it is inescapable that the words we use in sharing the Good News must move beyond being merely propositional facts to being a personal story. Sharing some truths divorced from our own lives is surely not what Jesus has in mind. He wants us to be able to talk about the Good News at work in us.

For our part, this will require openness and courage. Even before this, however, it will require that we are aware of how God is at work in us and that we are able to communicate it in ways that our friends will understand. Here we will use three exercises to help us with this.



THINGS TO DO/QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

GOOD NEWS FOR US TODAY

One of the difficulties we face is knowing what difference God has made in our lives. Intuitively we may know that, through the Good News, God has been changing us for good. However, when we have to pinpoint some of the ways those changes take effect, we can struggle to give details.

- First, go to the Backpack study 1.2.4 'Redemption – NOW'. Read through the table that lists a variety of aspects of Good News that we may experience. No two people are alike! Given our different personalities, life experiences, and stages of life, we should not be surprised to find that we each place slightly different values on the various aspects of Good News and feel some things more poignantly than others.
- Try to answer the following questions:
 - ? What is one big need the Good News has addressed in my life?
 - ? How did this need to show up in my life? Can you cite an incident that illustrates this?
 - ? When and how did God begin to meet this need through the Good News? Can you recall specific events?
 - ? What has changed since? Can you cite an incident that illustrates this?
- Using your answers above, tell a Christian friend how the Good News of God is changing your life. Ask for their feedback on whether it made sense and how you might improve the telling of it. Just saying it out loud will help make it clearer.
- Now you have a personal Good News story that you can share. Pray for an opportunity, and be ready to 'give a reason for the hope you have'! (1Pet3:15)

But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect
- 1 Peter 3:15

A second time (the Pharisees) summoned the man who had been blind. "Give glory to God and tell the truth," they said. "We know this man (Jesus) is a sinner." He replied, "Whether he is a sinner or not, I don't know. One thing I do know. I was blind but now I see!" - John 9:24-25



TAKE ACTION

OUR OWN STORIES OF THE KINGDOM

Jesus chose to tell lots of stories to illustrate what the Kingdom of God is like, and he used images that his audience could understand (e.g. mustard seed, lost sheep, hidden treasure). We need to do the same for our setting. If we use technical words (e.g. redemption, holiness) we risk having our audience either not understanding or attributing a different meaning to the words than what we intended. So we need to think hard and work hard to come up with a few images that communicate something of what God is calling us to. Try this:

My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, so that your faith might not rest on human wisdom, but on God's power.

1 Corinthians 2:4-5

1. **Pick an object from your everyday world** that reminds you of some aspect of following Jesus. Meet up with a fellow believer and explain its meaning. Seek feedback on how understandable the symbol and explanation are.

EXAMPLE: CD. A physical CD is small and two dimensional and yet there is much more to it than meets the eye (music, information, photos). In the same way, there is much more to us than meets the eye. God made us to live lives of great depth; to live superficial lives – focusing on the externals of how we look and what stuff we have – is to miss out on the purpose of living.

2. Choose **a film or book or event** you've been to recently that give some insights into following Jesus. Again, explain to your friend how the book/film/event sheds light on the good news.

EXAMPLE: A birthday party. Heaven is like a family birthday party because it's a celebration of who you are as a member of the family, not what you have or haven't achieved.



TAKE ACTION

At the heart of our belief is our relationship with God and our experience of him. BUT when we talk with others about faith we often resort to talking about the context of where we experienced God rather than what was going on inside of us. For example, we say 'I went to Navs' or 'Church', or 'I went to a Bible study' rather than 'I had an interesting discussion with some friends about what sort of things we can hope for in life...' etc. Although it's true that we go to these events or do these things, it doesn't actually communicate anything to an outsider. For them, our 'Christian faith' can be like an old church building: a large solid object with very small windows so you can't see what's going on inside!

- Try answering these questions to help give your friends the inside story of what's going on for you, in language that they can understand

Question	What is true for you in your own words?	How would you say this to someone else?
What are you praying about?		
How is God helping you with a problem?		
What are you reading in the Bible?		
What are you learning from others?		



6. SUMMARY

“How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!” But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, “Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?” So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ. - **Romans 10:14–17** (ESV)

As we reflect on this section on Sharing Faith, it is good to be reminded that God has called His people to both proclaim and embody the gospel message. What are some particular challenges to you in this calling? What are next steps that God is putting before you? Keep in mind this calling to both live and proclaim this awesome message and the privilege we have in being a part of others beginning their faith journey with Christ.



THINGS TO DO/QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

Go back over the studies in this section and briefly note down the main new things you have learnt or the things you have tried as you have sought to integrate more prayer into your life.

God may have got your attention about one or two things you need to do as a result of going through these studies. Whatever it is, you will have the best chance of succeeding in these things if you tell someone else about them and, if possible, if you practically plan when you will do these things. Write these things down somewhere that will help you to act on them!



THOUGHT TO FINISH

Here are some thoughts to keep in mind as we look to share this faith that is shaping our lives:

- ✓ **Authentic is good.** The Good News is passed from life to life. God can become visible in and through our lives in the good, the bad, and the ugly moments.
- ✓ **Incomplete is OK.** You can be in the middle of an experience without complete answers and that’s okay to talk about. That is just a part of sharing the journey.
- ✓ **Connect the dots.** People looking at our life just see results; they don’t see the internal workings of our hearts and mind. We can help them understand how God influences us by sharing things like how our praying made a difference in a situation, or how we were influenced by reading something in the Bible, or how we sensed God working circumstances in our favour, or how we were encouraged by other believers. Sharing internal workings will help them make sense of things.
- ✓ **A Jesus story is great.** If you can find a story from the Bible – especially a Jesus story – to link to your experience, thought, feeling, or action, that is particularly helpful. It can show how the Bible helps us, and by implication how reading it could potentially help them too.
- ✓ **Being subtle can be too subtle.** People unfamiliar with an active spirituality may struggle to know what you are talking about. Often (but not always) it’s better to be more obvious and up-front than to leave them to pick up subtle nuances of your faith experience.

THINGS TO HELP US RELATE TO OTHERS:

MENTORING



The LORD had said to Abram, "Go from your country, your people and your father's household to the land I will show you. I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you." - Genesis 12:1-3

This promise that the Lord gave to Abraham is woven like a thread right through the Bible, as it is passed from one generation to the next. In the Old Testament, the promise is passed through physical generations, but with the arrival of Jesus, the emphasis shifts to spiritual generations so that all who have faith in Jesus – regardless of culture – are considered to be children of Abraham (*Galatians 3:7*).

Jesus modeled how the promise would be passed on. He taught the crowds, he sent the 72 out in mission, *but* he lived with and explained everything to his 12 disciples; and even then he had 3 among the disciples that he was particularly close to. Rather than going broad with many, his emphasis was going deep with a few. We too are called to be disciples of Jesus and to help others do the same – not helping the hundreds or the dozens but helping the few within our reach.

We have called this topic ‘mentoring’ because as well as talking about ‘discipling’ (– someone helping a person younger in the faith) we also wanted to include peer mentoring and the seeking of help from those who are older. The models we talk about here are relevant to all three.

MENTORING STUDIES:

As you seek God through the studies listed below take time before you begin to ask God to reveal himself to you and to give you insight and understanding of His Word.

✓ 1. Mentoring – The Basics

✓ 2. Sharing Faith – Our Presence

✓ 3. Sharing Faith – Our Actions

✓ 4. Sharing Faith – Our Words from the Bible

✓ 5. Sharing Faith – Our Words from Our Lives

✓ 6. Summary



1. MENTORING – THE BASICS

We see mentoring in the world around us. In the workplace a new employee may have a mentor to teach them how to carry out their new role. On the sports field an athlete usually has a coach to train and motivate them to perform to their best. Life coaches enable people to achieve personal and business goals and personal trainers help people achieve their physical goals. So, what should mentoring be like between believers?

Mentoring in the Christian context is all about discipleship: helping people grow as disciples of Jesus, with the goal of becoming increasingly more like Christ. And as we look into the way people in the New Testament mentored others, we see this was not just a matter of passing on information or skills; it was also a matter of sharing of lives. This was Jesus' approach, as well as that of the early believers; we should not be surprised to discover that this is also what we are called to do.



THINGS TO DO/QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

The Apostle Paul uses the analogy of parenting to help us understand what it means to be a mentor. He talks about helping new believers just like a “mother caring for her little children” or like a father dealing with his children “encouraging, comforting, and urging” them to live lives worthy of God. In the book of 1 Thessalonians, we are given a window into the way Paul, Silas, and Timothy helped the new believers at Thessalonica.

- Read the book of 1 Thessalonians (only about 3 pages long 😊) noticing the *attitude* and *actions* of Paul, Silas, and Timothy towards the Thessalonians. Write your reflections below.

Attitude toward the Thessalonians	Actions to help the Thessalonians	What might these practically look like in your own mentoring relationships?

SOME MENTORING PRINCIPLES

- **We influence people with our lives**, not only with information. Take your mentoring beyond meeting in a cafe.
Look out for practical ways you can serve your friend, or opportunities to serve others together.
- **God is at work in your friend's life** completing the work He started. We are junior partners with God.
This means prayer and listening to God are an essential part of mentoring.
- **Recognise the unseen spiritual realities.** There are spiritual forces working against the purposes of God in people's lives and there is a battle between the Spirit in us and our own sinful desires. We all need encouragement and help to live by the Spirit and not for ourselves.
- **Jesus and Paul had a clear purpose** when they helped others. "Follow me and I will make you fishers of people" (Matthew 4:19). "We want to present them to God, perfect (mature) in their relationship to Christ" (Colossians 1:28). What is the purpose of your mentoring relationship?
- **Jesus and Paul prayed for those they were helping.** Prayer will come from the realisation that helping people to become mature in their faith requires a lot of things that only God can do.
- **Jesus had a finish point.** There was a time when his role ended and he handed things over to the Spirit (John 16:7). We need to have beginning, review, and end points.

If we think of our Christian life as a journey there will be people around us at a similar place in their faith journey (peers), there will be those who are further along in their faith journey (potential mentors) and also people just starting out on their faith journey (people we could mentor). If possible, we should be looking for mentoring relationships with each of these types of people, even if some of these relationships involve less frequent meetings than others.

Getting started in mentoring is a step of faith. We may question our ability or experience, especially if we are looking to help someone else grow in their walk with God. But we really don't need to be experts to do this; we just need to be one small step ahead. Helping someone a little is much better than leaving them to work it all out for themselves.

We may also question whether the person we want to ask will be interested. However, the potential benefits of doing this are exponentially so much greater than the risk of them saying 'no'; the only failure is not asking.

- What experiences have you had of mentoring?
How have these experiences shaped your view of mentoring?

How do I decide who to mentor?

- Pray! Ask God to lead you by putting people He wants you to help on your heart, and bringing these people across your path.
- Ask yourself and others you are teaming up with: "Who is around and is keen to grow?" "Who is young in their faith and would benefit from some personal help?"
- Look for signs of an open heart and a learning attitude. Signs to look for in other people might include: asking questions, listening to others' views, talking about knowing God, excitement about sharing their faith with others, serving and helping others...
- Since mentoring requires a relationship between yourself and the person you mentor ask; "Who am I developing rapport with? Who seems to be responsive to talking with me about spiritual things?"



TAKE ACTION

➔ Prayerfully think about the people you know. Write down the names of potential people you could initiate a mentoring relationship with...

- ✓ Someone newer to faith who you could encourage and help:
- ✓ A peer for mutual encouragement:
- ✓ Someone you would like to learn from :

➔ After more prayer, decide on someone to ask... then go for it. You will both have so much to gain from it!



2. MENTORING — THREE STORIES MEET

Nobody is ever a blank slate; we all have history, experiences, and personality that have shaped us. If we are going to be an encouragement to someone else in their walk with the Lord, it will be really helpful to understand as much as possible their story and what has been happening for them. However, this is not enough, because we also have to take into account two other stories that have a significant part to play in our interaction: our own story and the Bible story. We need to be listening carefully for how all three of these stories interact so that we can understand what the Lord might be saying to us and to the person we are trying to encourage.



THINGS TO DO/QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. UNDERSTAND YOUR FRIEND'S STORY

- **Step into your friend's shoes.** Imagine how things are from your friend's point of view. What are they thinking and feeling? Putting yourself in their shoes requires you to suspend your own natural judgment of their experience and perspective. Try to just understand their thoughts and feelings rather than judging them. As you do this, you will have more empathy and a better understanding of them and their world; but this will take time.
- **Listen for underlying interests and concerns.** Jesus was a masterful listener and observer. He often responded to people's underlying concerns or patterns of thinking (For example, with Martha and Mary (Luke 10:38-42) and with the rich man (Mark 10:17-22)). As you listen to your friend describe an incident or an experience they have had, try to understand what's going on beneath the surface for them with their emotions and responses. As human beings we are complicated! It takes effort and time to work out the longings and deep issues that people are really wrestling with.



TAKE ACTION

- ➔ For effective understanding, you need to listen well. Some people are better at this than others but regardless, we all need to do it. Make sure you work through the next mentoring model: listening in 3 places to get help in improving your listening.

2. RELATE YOUR OWN STORY

- As you listen to your friend, your own stories and experiences will come to mind. What have you experienced in this area? What has God taught you in this area? What Bible passages have been particularly helpful to you? One warning: be careful of just looking for opportunities to get your own experiences into the conversation and shifting the emphasis to you. The most helpful thing to do will be to listen to your friend first before trying to recall your own stories.



TAKE ACTION

- Keep a journal of what God teaches you. Life and experiences can move along so quickly that we don't have time to reflect on what God has taught us. Old lessons and experiences get buried beneath new ones. Journaling is one way of slowing down and reflecting on what God is doing and teaching us. These life lessons are then more accessible to share with others.

3. CONNECT TO THE BIBLE STORY

- The Big Picture.** As a whole, the Bible is a big story that speaks to us about who we are, where we have come from, what's wrong with our world, and where we are headed. The big themes of creation, fall, redemption, and future hope can be related to many of the issues we face in life. When talking about an issue we can consider how these big themes are reflected in what we are facing and how we might respond. (For more detail on this, refer to the Backpack section 'What God is doing'.)
- Individual Stories.** The Bible also contains many little stories of how people tried to follow God or follow their own way. These stories are recorded to help us learn from the good and bad choices of others. God will often bring to mind a story in the Bible or something that we have read recently that relates to what our friend has shared. This is one of the mysteries of living with God: how God by His Spirit is able to make use of what we have learned and recently read in the Bible. One good reason for staying in the Bible regularly is that it gives the Holy Spirit some good raw material to work with as we seek to help others.



TAKE ACTION

- On a piece of paper, write down the issue you are discussing at the top of the page, and then down the left side write: creation; fall; redemption; future hope. Together with your friend think through how these themes and any relevant passages might shed some light on the issue.
- Once you have done the above exercise, consider:
- Are there any stories of people in the Bible that had to wrestle with this issue?
 - What lessons or principles did they apply?
 - What can you learn from their example to practically apply to your issue at hand?



3. MENTORING – LISTENING IN 3 PLACES

Following on from the previous model which involved trying to find connections between your friend's story, your own story and the Bible story, this model focuses on something that's needed if we are to make those links: listening. It will really help you grow as a mentor if you can keep getting better at listening in three places when meeting with someone: listening to your friend, listening to yourself, and listening to the Holy Spirit.



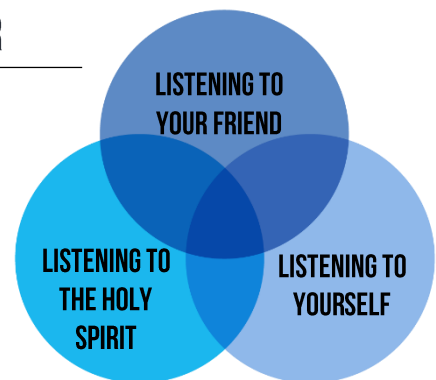
THINGS TO DO/QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

LISTENING IN THREE PLACES

1. LISTEN TO YOUR FRIEND'S STORY

Truly listening to someone is like standing beside them and looking out at the world through their eyes. Listening like this communicates value and respect for our friend and their perspective. Think about times when someone has really listened to you. What did this feel like? How did this help you?

Listening like this is rare. A danger for mentors is giving advice before properly understanding what is happening for your friend – and in fact whether or not they actually want to hear your advice! Your friend may simply, yet profoundly, want you to listen; and perhaps with some occasional questions, you may be able to help them figure out for themselves the best way forward.



TAKE ACTION

When listening to your friend, try these things:

- **Be fully present.** People reveal what they really think and feel when they believe the person they are talking to is genuinely interested in them. Maintain good eye contact and suspend your own thoughts and judgments in order to create space to hear and fully understand what your friend is experiencing.
- **Reflect back** to your friend what you understand they are saying and feeling. To help you get started, try using the formula: "You feel (say the feeling word) because (say the event or content that is associated with the feeling)." "You feel...because..." is not intrusive in conversations and helps us to remember to reflect feelings and content.
- **Ask occasional questions.** It can be easy to rely on questions and use them excessively and inappropriately. Often questions focus on the concerns and perspective of the listener rather than those of the speaker. This causes a barrier to communication by dictating the direction of the conversation. Ask fewer questions (many questions can be expressed as statements and this can be more productive in a conversation). Use open rather than closed questions, asking only one question at a time and allowing periods of silence.

2. LISTENING TO YOURSELF

We each carry out an inner conversation while talking with someone. During a conversation we experience judgments, questions, concerns, daydreaming, and preoccupation with our own thoughts, even thinking about what we will say next. This internal conversation can promote conversation with our friend, or it can hinder our conversation by distracting us from truly listening. To be used positively, we need to suspend judgment and let our internal conversation reflect on our friend's expression and our response to this.

Suspending Judgment

When you suspend judgment you can recognise your own judgments as they occur in conversation. This helps you reflect and respond in ways that promote true dialogue. It's not possible or helpful to stop judging all together; the judging process helps us form our own opinions and evaluate ideas. The aim of *suspending* your judgment is to create space between your judgment and your automatic response in the conversation. This space allows you to evaluate your judgment and consider other possibilities. Reacting to your judgments in a 'knee jerk' way stops you from seeing alternative perspectives, shuts down your listening, and will prevent you from understanding your friend. On-the-spot reflection involves stopping the automatic flow of thoughts in your thinking so that you can ask yourself questions about what has been happening so far in the conversation. During reflection, you are trying to better understand your own and others thinking and reasoning, and secondly to make connections between your friends' story, your story, and the Biblical story.



TAKE ACTION

→ Try reflecting on these questions during a conversation:

- How am I responding to what my friend is saying?
- How is my heart responding?
- Are any experiences of my own coming to the surface?
- What is God impressing on me?
- Would it be helpful to share this?

3. LISTENING TO THE HOLY SPIRIT

When we believe in Jesus, God's Spirit comes to live inside of us. Jesus told his disciples how the Spirit would help them once Jesus returned to be with the Father (see John 14 and 16). Jesus tells us that the Spirit will be our teacher and our guide, and will even bring things to mind that we have learned. This is a great encouragement when we meet with someone. We are not on our own; God is present with us by His Spirit and will bring things to mind as we seek to help our friend.

In John 10 Jesus tells us that his sheep (followers) listen to His voice, know Him, and follow Him. Recognising Jesus' leading is part of growing as a follower of Jesus. As we get involved in mentoring others we will need this help and guidance from Jesus to ensure the help we offer is from God and not just our own good ideas.



TAKE ACTION

- Pray before you meet with your friend. Ask God to guide your time together and give you wisdom so that you will know how to respond.
- Pray silently to God while you are meeting your friend. "What are you doing in my friend's life, Lord?" "How would you like me to respond?" "What would you like me to say or ask?" "What passages in the Bible might speak to my friends' situation?"



4. MENTORING – 3 KEY ACTIVITIES

When you get together with someone to help them grow in their walk with God, there are many different things you could do together. Although some of these things may change over time, we would like to suggest three things that are foundational and will always be good to include: sharing your lives, reading the Bible, and praying together.



THINGS TO DO/QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

THREE KEY ACTIVITIES

1. SHARING OUR LIVES

Mentoring is not primarily a matter of transferring information about following Jesus to another person. If this was so, a good book or DVD would do the job. Rather, the Christian faith is all about relationship: relationship with God way we learn about the Christian faith is from what we see in others. To be a good mentor we need to open our lives to others by sharing things about ourselves and by letting our friends see our life in action.



Part of this sharing includes sharing our struggles. Like all people, we struggle with sin, we struggle to relate well with some people, we struggle under the pressure of work or study and we sometimes struggle with sickness. It can help those we are mentoring if we are honest about our struggles, bringing them into the light. As we do this we can help one another to bring our lives and struggles honestly to God for His help and truth.



TAKE ACTION

- ➔ Ask how things are going in your friend's important life areas e.g. workplace (relationships with workmates), family, flatmates, sports team, etc. Often God teaches us about ourselves and becoming more like Christ through our interactions with the people we see regularly. Often it's when things are not going well with others that we potentially learn the most. Processing these challenges with faith in God in mind can help us learn and change through these experiences. Sharing your experiences in this helps.
- ➔ Look at each other's relational world, especially friends and acquaintances who do not know God yet. Ask each other; "Is there someone God is putting on my heart? What is God doing in my friends' lives? What would be good news for these friends? Is there something God is prompting me to do with 1-2 of my friends?" Pray for the people God has brought to mind, and the ideas God had given you.

Because we loved you so much, we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well.

- 1 Thessalonians 2:8

Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. - 1 Peter 4:8

- ➔ Ask your friend how their walk with God is at present. What is helping them to know God better? What are the barriers? How could they address these? Share your experience as well.
- ➔ Ask about what you discussed together last time when you met. It can be helpful to write a few notes after meeting to help you pray for your friend, follow up on questions or areas where more help is needed, and to help you remember what you talked about when you next meet.

2. READING THE BIBLE TOGETHER

In his book Lifestyle Discipleship, Jim Peterson makes the comment that “Books might fill their heads with good ideas, but only the Scriptures can fill their hearts with Christ.” Being in the Bible together ensures we get God’s perspective on the things we talk about. We also give God the opportunity to speak into each other’s life.



TAKE ACTION

- ➔ Work through a Navigator Backpack section. Ideally prepare personally beforehand and share what you have learned when you meet together.
- ➔ As you share what’s been happening in your lives with each other, think about Bible stories or passages that relate to what you have been talking about. Read and discuss the Bible passage together. The Bible should be our first port of call when addressing an issue or question.
- ➔ Review memory verses you have each been learning. Encourage each other in this way of getting the Bible into our lives.
- ➔ Read passages in the Bible that address a question or topic your friend wants to learn about. You may have to do some homework to find passages or stories in the bible that will help your friend in this area.

They said to each other, "Didn't our hearts burn within us as He (Jesus) talked with us on the road and explained the Scriptures to us?" - Luke 24:32

3. PRAYING TOGETHER

Praying together not only involves God in your learning and growth, it models to the person you are meeting with that prayer is vitally important. As with most practical skills, people learn as much from example as from other means. If you would like to help your friend to pray, then praying with them is probably the best way to achieve this.



TAKE ACTION

- ➔ If you meet in a cafe, finish 15 minutes early and go for a walk and pray together.
- ➔ Before meeting with someone make time to pray for your friend, your time together, what is happening in their life, and for their friends who don't know God yet.
- ➔ Every 4-6 weeks find a place where you can pray together. Instead of talking spend the time together praying for one another and the people in your relational worlds.
- ➔ Every 3-6 months set aside some time personally to pray for the people you are meeting with. Use the questions on the right to guide your prayer

Reviewing with God your mentoring relationships

Ask God:

- Where is my friend in their walk with Christ?
- What is he or she ready for?
- What is most urgent? What will most help the person go on to the next level of maturity, or break through a barrier in their life?
- How can I help?



5. SUMMARY

[18] And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. [19] Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, [20] teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” - **Matthew 28:18–20** (ESV)

As we reflect on this section on God’s plan to make disciples of all nations, it is good to be reminded that God has called ALL His people to participate. Reflect on all those who have been faithful to that command by mentoring you in your walk with God.



THINGS TO DO/QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

Go back over the studies in this section and briefly note down the main new things you have learnt or the things you have tried as you have sought to integrate more prayer into your life.



God may have got your attention about one or two things you need to do as a result of going through these studies. Whatever it is, you will have the best chance of succeeding in these things if you tell someone else about them and, if possible, if you practically plan when you will do these things. Write these things down somewhere that will help you to act on them!



THOUGHT TO FINISH

Mentoring is crucial for passing the Gospel on to the next generation. Regardless of how well-equipped we feel for this, it is a task given to us all. Jesus’ last words in Matthew’s gospel were spoken to all those present, *including* the doubters: ‘Go and make disciples...’ In one way or another, it is something we all must do for, if we don’t do it, who will? The Lord has given us a significant part to in building his kingdom, but we can also take great comfort that we are junior partners in this venture; he is the one who brings life from death, transforming people from the inside out. So let’s leave the lion’s share of the work to God, but let’s be diligent in doing what we are called to do: make disciples!

THINGS TO HELP US RELATE TO OTHERS:

COMMUNITY



Repeatedly through the Genesis creation story we find the statement, “and God saw *it was good*”. However, this changes once the Lord creates the first human being. Then God himself says, “It *is not good* for the man to be *alone*”. The first negative statement in the Bible has to do with human ‘aloneness.’

We are fundamentally social beings. We need deep satisfying relationships with others to be fully human. This should not surprise us because God himself is a social being, a trinity – Father, Son and Holy Spirit. A ‘small group’ or community, if you like. And in the Trinity we see the members of the Godhead nurturing, celebrating and enjoying their wonderful shared life, from all eternity. We are created in the image of this divine ‘small group’ and naturally we long for deep satisfying relationships with a few friends. It is coded in.

This section on community explores the issues: what should Christian community look like and feel like in order for it to be sustainable? We also delve into the practical details of what ingredients will help you be part of a successful small group, whether with other believers or with those exploring faith.

This section does have a mixture of ideas to consider as well as practical things to try in small group settings. Be willing to try some new things. There is potentially so much to be gained, and so little to be lost. Give it a go!

COMMUNITY STUDIES:

As you seek God through the studies listed below take time before you begin to ask God to reveal himself to you and to give you insight and understanding of His Word.

✓ 1. Community – Building the Body

✓ 2. The One Another’s

✓ 3. Giving Generously

✓ 4. Small Group Basics

✓ 5. Small Groups Exploring Faith

✓ 6. Summary



1. COMMUNITY - BUILDING THE BODY

After Jesus had risen from the dead, he met with his disciples and said to them: “you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8). After he said this, he was taken up into heaven. From the Book of Acts onwards, we can clearly see that the Holy Spirit did fill them with power and propel this movement forward... increasingly from one end of the earth to the other, all the way to the present day. To make this happen, everyone had a part to play.



THINGS TO DO/QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

GIFTS FROM GOD FOR SERVICE

No two people are alike! God has given us all different gifts and strengths so that we can all make our unique contributions to build up the body of believers.

- Read the following passages which talk about the gifts that God gives to his people through the Spirit. Summarise what they say. What is the function of God’s gifts to us in the growth of the body?

Romans 12:3-8

1 Corinthians 12:1-11

Ephesians 4:7-16

1 Peter 4:10-11

- From what you know of yourself, what do you believe are your strengths or gifts that you could use to build up the Body?

There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work... All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he distributes them to each one, just as he determines.

1 Corinthians 12:4-7,11

KEEPING THE GOSPEL MOVING

In the New Testament, from a big picture point of view, we see four inter-connected contributions made by people that kept the gospel moving in a place as well as through that place to elsewhere...

- **Pioneers** – who brought the gospel to a new place, including preaching and taking risks amongst people they didn't yet know (Acts 13:1-4).
- **Local Labourers** – who lived out their Christian life amongst family, friends, and acquaintances.
- **Local Leaders** – who shepherded, envisioned, and taught the local labourers (Acts 20:28-36).
- **Mobile Alongsiders** – who moved between cities to build up local leaders and labourers and to keep them connected with and learning from those outside their local context (Acts 16:1-5).

LOCAL LABOURERS

Regardless of our involvement in the other roles, we all have some settings in which we are local labourers. Read through a selection of the verses below and summarise; these give insight into how the gospel was to penetrate the society of the day through the lives of the local labourers. In light of these passages, are there any things you need to start or stop doing?

Romans 12:14-21

1 Corinthians 5:9-13

1 Corinthians 14:22-25

Galatians 6:9-10

Ephesians 6:5-9

Philippians 1:27-30

Philippians 2:14-16

Colossians 4:5-6

1 Thessalonians 4:11-12

1 Timothy 2:1-4

1 Timothy 3:1-7

Titus 2:2-10



THOUGHT TO FINISH

TWO QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

For some Christians, they believe that as long as you attend a Sunday morning church service you are fine. This, however, misses the point. As we can see from this study, we all have unique contributions to make and we all need the contributions of others so that the Body of Christ – the Church – can be built up and expanded. Two good questions to ask yourself are:

1. For you, what practical support do you think you need in order to sustain a life of faith and mission? If these needs are not currently being met, who do you know who could help you with this?
2. Given your strengths and gifts, in what ways do you think you could practically support and build up any other believers that you know so that the gospel keeps moving forward?

Talk to someone about this and start doing what you can, because we are all better off when each of us makes our own unique contributions to the Body.



2. THE ONE ANOTHER'S

It doesn't take long reading the New Testament to realise that when it comes to relationships, the emphasis is on quality rather than quantity. Given the model of who God is and how he relates to us, the believers are frequently encouraged to put into practise the 'one anothers'. Practising these not only help to continually improve how we relate with each other, but they also make the gospel visible to anyone looking in as the good news is shared from life to life.



THINGS TO DO/QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- On the next page is a collection of New Testament verses describing how we should treat one another. Underline or write in the margin the key 'one another' idea from each of the verses listed.
- Taking your list of ideas from above, describe the big 'flavours' of the New Testament community – the things that would have characterised the relationships amongst these groups of believers.



TAKE ACTION

- Think about some of the believing friends you regularly relate with. Given the 'one anothers' above, what ONE thing could you do this week to deepen one or some of these relationships?
- Thinking more broadly, are there others outside your regular group of Christian friends that you could improve in the way you relate to them? What initiative can you take to do this?

"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

John 13:34-35

'ONE ANOTHER' VERSES IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

<p>John 13:34-35 "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."</p> <p>Romans 12:10 Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honour one another above yourselves.</p> <p>Romans 12:16 Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.</p> <p>Romans 14:13 Therefore let us stop passing judgment on one another. Instead, make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in your brother's way.</p> <p>Romans 15:7 Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God.</p> <p>Romans 15:14 I myself am convinced, my brothers, that you yourselves are full of goodness, complete in knowledge and competent to instruct one another.</p> <p>1 Corinthians 1:10 I appeal to you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another so that there may be no divisions among you and that you may be perfectly united in mind and thought.</p> <p>Galatians 5:13 You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love.</p> <p>Galatians 5:15 If you keep on biting and devouring each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other.</p> <p>Galatians 5:26 Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.</p>	<p>Ephesians 4:2 Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.</p> <p>Ephesians 4:32 Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.</p> <p>Ephesians 5:21 Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.</p> <p>Colossians 3:9 Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices</p> <p>Colossians 3:13 Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.</p> <p>Colossians 3:16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.</p> <p>1 Thessalonians 3:12 May the Lord make your love increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else, just as ours does for you.</p> <p>1 Thessalonians 5:11 Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.</p> <p>1 Thessalonians 5:13 Hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work. Live in peace with each other.</p> <p>1 Thessalonians 5:15 Make sure that nobody pays back wrong for wrong, but always try to be kind to each other and to everyone else.</p> <p>Hebrews 3:13 But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness.</p>	<p>Hebrews 10:24-25 And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another--and all the more as you see the Day approaching.</p> <p>James 5:9 Don't grumble against each other, brothers, or you will be judged. The Judge is standing at the door!</p> <p>James 5:16 Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.</p> <p>1 Peter 1:22 Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for your brothers, love one another deeply, from the heart.</p> <p>1 Peter 3:8 Finally, all of you, live in harmony with one another; be sympathetic, love as brothers, be compassionate and humble.</p> <p>1 Peter 4:8-9 Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling.</p> <p>1 Peter 5:5 Young men, in the same way be submissive to those who are older. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, 'God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.'</p> <p>1 John 1:7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.</p> <p>1 John 4:11-12 Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.</p>
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NOTE: Additional "one another" verses include: Mark 9:50; John 5:12, 15:17; Romans 13:8, 16:16; 1 Corinthians 11:33, 12:25, 16:20; 2 Corinthians 13:12; Ephesians 5:19; Philippians 4:2; 1 Thessalonians 4:9, 4:18; 2 Thessalonians 1:3; Hebrews 13:1; James 4:11; 1 Peter 5:14; 1 John 3:11, 3:23, 4:7; 2 John 1:5. Many of these are about loving one another.



3. GIVING GENEROUSLY

'There are three conversions necessary to every man; the head, the heart and the purse.'

- Martin Luther

Money itself is neutral as a store of value, but people can really crave the value it brings, and how we handle money can be a test of what we believe to be true and important.

In today's world, many Christian and charitable organisations work hard at marketing their various projects. For the individual believer, they can be inundated with good causes to give to, with letters, emails, and telemarketers all promoting the worthiness of their projects. This can be very confusing. Certainly, the Bible talks a lot about money – and particularly the dangers of loving it too much – but what does it say about giving?



THINGS TO DO/QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

In 2 Corinthians chapters 8-9, Paul gives us some great principles in the area of Christian giving.

- Read 2 Corinthians chapters 8 and 9.
- Note from these chapters some of the following principles:

PRINCIPLES OF CHRISTIAN GIVING

- Jesus is the model of Christian giving (2Corinthians 8:9).
 - It is a 'grace' of the Spirit (2Corinthians 8:7).
 - Our financial giving should be a reflection of us first giving ourselves to the Lord (2Corinthians 8:5).
 - It is to be done voluntarily rather than out of compulsion (2Corinthians 8:8-12; 9:1-2,5,7).
 - It is to be done by everyone, whether rich or poor (2Corinthians 8:1-3, 12-15).
 - The amount given is to be in proportion to income (– not necessarily the 10% tithe amount found in the Old Testament) (2Corinthians 8:12-14).
 - The giving is to be generous (2Corinthians 9:5-6)
 - Christian giving results in thanks to God, with both the Lord and the gospel glorified (2Corinthians 9:12-14).
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- How does the above picture compare with what, if anything, you thought Christian giving should include and be motivated by?
 - How does the way you currently give match up to these criteria?

Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. - 1 Timothy 6:17-18

GIVE TO WHAT?

Generally speaking, within the context of the 'one anothers', we should be using our financial resources to show love to one another in our world of relationships.

Two other categories of people that are mentioned in the New Testament with regards to giving are:

1. THE POOR

Luke 11:37-41; 14:12-14; 18:18-22

Acts 11:28-30

Romans 15:26-27

Galatians 2:9-10

- What criteria do you currently use to give money to the poor?
- Taking into account the verses above and the principles of giving listed on the previous page, are there any changes to where or how or how much you give to people in need?

One of them, named Agabus, stood up and through the Spirit predicted that a severe famine would spread over the entire Roman world. (This happened during the reign of Claudius.) The disciples, as each one was able, decided to provide help for the believers living in Judea. This they did, sending their gift to the elders by Barnabas and Saul. - **Acts 11:28-30**

2. PEOPLE MINISTERING IN THE GOSPEL

Luke 8:1-3

Philippians 4:15-19

Galatians 6:6

1 Corinthians 9:3-14

1 Timothy 5:17-18

- What criteria do you currently use to give money to people involved in Christian mission?
- Taking into account the verses above and the principles of giving listed on the previous page, are there any changes to where or how or how much you give to people working in service of the gospel?

After this, Jesus travelled about from one town and village to another, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God. The Twelve were with him, and also some women who had been cured of evil spirits and diseases... These women were helping to support them out of their own means. - **Luke 8:1-3**



TAKE ACTION

Here are some possible action steps you could take:

- ➔ Make a budget. This will help you see how much you are earning and what you believe the Lord would want you to give to others.
- ➔ Prayerfully ask yourself: how well does my giving align with the things I believe to be important? Does my giving bring glory to the Lord and the gospel? You can't say 'yes' to everything, but being able to say 'yes' to something you believe in will make it easier to say 'no' to others promoting good causes (but ones that ultimately may not align as well with your values).
- ➔ Be proactive. If you resolve to give a certain amount of money, do it! Make it easy to make it happen (e.g. set up an automatic payment).

Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to them, "Go in peace; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead. - **James 2:15-17**



4. SMALL GROUP BASICS

It is common to meet Christian friends socially, but our relationship with Jesus rarely gets mentioned in these conversations. We need to get together in ways that are more intentional if we really want to grow in our walk with God, as we seek answers to the same questions that the Apostle Paul asked Jesus at his conversion: ‘Who are you, Lord?’ and ‘What shall I do, Lord?’ (Acts 22:8-10). Being part of a small group can help us in this quest. The small group has a vital role, sitting between the more intense and personal one-to-one discipling and the more general, less interactive church or large group meetings. Small groups are great places for honest interaction, accountability, and for the exercising of the various gifts that God has given people in the group. This study looks at some important ingredients that need to be considered as for a successful small group to operate. They are important things to bear in mind if you are leading the group, but they are also invaluable for all members of the group to be aware of because ultimately all group members are responsible for how well the group goes.



THINGS TO DO/QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

STARTING A SMALL GROUP

A good first step is to meet with a few interested friends to pray and decide how you can love and encourage one another, and how you can serve and show Jesus to those in your world.

3 Purposes for a Small Group	Good Questions to Consider as you start
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Worship</i> – a focus on God, and a deepening of our appreciation of Him. (Colossians 3:16) • <i>Transformation</i> - nurturing and celebrating our shared life and encouraging one another to grow to be more like Jesus Christ. (Hebrews 10:24,25) • <i>Mission</i> - praying for and reaching out to others. (see Matt 18:19-20, John 20:21) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are our expectations and desires for the group? • What commitments will we make to one another? (confidentiality, preparation, attendance,...) • How often shall we meet? • When and where shall we meet? • What shall we do when we get together?

Essential Ingredients Of A Small Group Get-Together

- A relaxed social setting. It is not business; it is friendship. See if you can find a way to include food and drink, a meal even!
- Praise and thanksgiving. You are meeting together in God’s presence. Celebrate that! This will bring joy and a growing confidence in God.
- Time in the bible together. This should not be superficial, nor should it be dominated by a few. Everyone should be encouraged to dig in for themselves and share what they have found.
- Honest sharing. It will feel risky to say what is really going on but it will be worth it. We will never get anywhere if we are not real with one another. Confidentiality is important here.
- Prayer for one another’s needs, desires, aspirations, and action steps. We need healthy accountability. We need to help one another to follow through on the things God is putting on our hearts.
- An outward focus. This is “a group for others”. It will ultimately stagnate unless it sees itself existing for people outside the group as well as those in the group. This involves praying for one another’s friends and finding ways to team together to reach and serve others.

COMPONENTS OF A SMALL GROUP MEETING

The primary outcomes for the believers should be *transformation* and involvement in *mission*. What happens in the group should result in the development of a walk with God that transforms every aspect of our daily lives. The group time should connect with our real-life situations and result in “love and good deeds” (Hebrew 10:24-25). The group time will benefit from including the following:

Component:	Worship (Believers to God)	The Word of God (God to Believers)	Mutual Ministry (Believer to Believer)	Mission (Believer to Unbeliever)
Definition	Praising God by focussing on his nature and character	Receiving heart-level input from God	Building loving, helpful relationships	Reaching out with the good news of Christ's love
Goal	To bring joy to God and assurance to believers	To grow in mind and spirit toward the image of Christ	To knit us together in love and build us as whole people	To help people outside the group know God and become like Jesus
Examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Praise •Reading worshipful passages from the bible •Reading poetry •Singing or listening to music •Lord's supper 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Discussing passages in the Bible •Memorising Bible statements •Reading books •Videos and Tapes •Meditation exercises •Prior study 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Conversational prayer •Eating together •Identifying/developing/using gifts •Recreation •Weekends away •Praying/Processing situations together 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Praying for non-Christian friends •Helping one another find ways/ideas for reaching friends •Teaming together in mission activities

Some additional thoughts...

- Generally, the flow of the meeting should move from left to right in the table above. However, time should be given at the beginning for relaxed relating and catch-up.
- Each person should feel welcome and at ease with the other members of the group. Something to drink and maybe to eat provides an informal gathering point as people arrive. An ice-breaker that gets every person saying something is very helpful. The simplest way to ask people to share something significant that has happened during the week.
- Also, people should feel welcomed by God. The Spirit of God loves to use the Bible to warm our hearts to God. Reading a short passage and sharing an encouraging thought or giving people the opportunity to comment on it is a simple way to do this.
- Always conclude the meeting with an outward focus. This is 'a group for others'. It will ultimately stagnate unless it sees itself existing for people outside the group as well as those in the group.

preparation	Resources	closure
The better the preparation by everyone – and especially the leader – the better your group time will be. More time can be spent on extracting key truths from the passage and possible practical implications for us, and less time on some of the more obvious ideas. By focusing on the scriptures being studied we are less likely to spin off into unrelated personal opinions or being dominated by 'collective ignorance'. Make sure you do at least the agreed minimum preparation time but don't let that limit you!	<p>Look through the Bible section of the Backpack for general ideas on how to get into the Bible, especially: '3. The Bible –study it'.</p> <p>Look through the resources section of the website for downloadable guided Bible studies on books of the Bible as well as topical studies: www.navigators.org.nz.</p> <p>The resources section also has more detailed information on running a small group in a paper called: 'Small Group Leading'</p>	Don't assume a group will go on indefinitely; it is good to review each year. The group may end all at once, or two or three of the members may split off to be involved in a new small group initiative. Whatever the case, when closure comes, leaders can help group members reflect on what God has done. Sometimes things happen so gradually that we forget to notice growth. Reviewing helps us rejoice in the good that has taken place. It is also a time to appreciate the individuals in our group and give thanks together for the strengths God has given each of us, praying for each other as we move on to new small group involvements.



5. SMALL GROUPS EXPLORING FAITH

The previous study described a basic approach to starting and sustaining a small group with a focus on helping people grow in discipleship.

This study also has a focus on helping people along the journey of discipleship, but in this case, some or most of these people are starting the journey from a long way back. In other words, in a group setting, the emphasis here is helping people who don't yet believe in Jesus.



THINGS TO DO/QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

GROUP FOR EXPLORING FAITH: WHO DOES WHAT?

WHAT needs to happen for a person to believe in Jesus?	WHO does WHAT in a person's life?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the message: A person needs to understand the Gospel: who Jesus Christ is, why he did what he did, and what he wants from us in response. However, ignorance is not the real obstacle to faith. Take care to focus on the main truths of the Gospel and not get lost on tangents. • Submit their life to God: The real problem is rebellion. Sin is "everyone turning to his or her own way" (Isaiah 53:6). Coming to faith in Jesus is ending the rebellion; it is coming out with your hands up, into the arms of the Lord who loves you greatly. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Bible: The Bible speaks the truth. Truth from the Bible can heal spiritual blindness and reveal our thoughts and attitudes (see Hebrews 4:11-12). God can use the Bible to do this even when a person is undecided about what they think of this Book. • The Holy Spirit: The Spirit is the one who convicts a person. He convinces us of our sin, of what is right, and that we all face consequences for our wrongdoing. The Spirit gives people new life. (See John 16:4- 11). • Our Part: We share our lives and how the message has transformed us. We also pray. We love people and help them understand what is written in the Bible (see 1John 1:2-3). It's good to remember that it's a team effort: "one person sows and another person reaps" (John 4:37-38). This helps us to be patient and to trust God who oversees everything.

We tend to overstep our role and try to do the work of the Holy Spirit and of the Bible. This leaves us attempting to do the impossible, and frustrates us and those who we seek to help.

We need to go into the discussion as a *learner amongst learners*. That's what we are! There is always more to learn about Christ and becoming like Him. We need to realise that we are on the same journey as our friends. They need to submit to Christ and follow him. So do we.

Things to do before the faith discussion

- **Pray!** There is a spiritual battle over the lives of people. Prayer is one of the key weapons God has given us. Expect some opposition along the way. There will be times you don't feel like turning up to the discussion. Thank God for the people and the opportunity he has given you.
- **Be prepared for the discussion**
 - Understand the chapter you are going to discuss. Think about it and let it speak to you first.
 - Prepare a few questions that will direct people into the big ideas of the Bible passage.
 - Be prepared to simply and succinctly explain the critical ideas of the chapter. Use these explanations only if necessary.
 - Meeting with another person to discuss the passage ahead of time helps you to understand the main truths, and for these to come alive in your own life.

Things to do when you meet for your faith discussion

- **Create a welcoming environment.** Be a great host. What could you do to help make people feel at ease? Realise you are doing this for your friends, not to make you feel more important.
- **Give people the space they need to think.** People need room to doubt, to wrestle with the truths they encounter, and to weigh the cost of their decision to submit to Christ. You need to create an environment that says: 'thinking is encouraged here!' This means as a facilitator you should listen more than talk and ask questions more than giving the answers. Remember the real issue for people is submitting to Christ. The temptation to try to win every point in the discussion can work against that happening. Our need to win can generate resistance – against us, and consequently the Gospel!
- **Keep the discussion on track.** A rambling discussion meets no one's needs and frustrates everyone. Your job is to consistently bring the discussion back to the biblical text. Keep in mind that you're together to help each other understand what is written in the Bible.
- **Allow the Bible to speak for itself.** You don't need to defend it. Remind yourself that your security rests with God, not on how your friends view you or what you believe. Resist the temptation to defend or prove things in the Bible.
- **Don't be afraid of silence.** People need time to think.
- **Occasionally summarise the truths you have covered.** Sometimes a summary is a good occasion to give a succinct explanation of the Gospel. This can help clarify the fact that this message calls for a response.

Some practical suggestions

- The ideal group size is between 6-8 people. Larger groups can make the discussion more difficult.
- Limit the number of Christians in the group and choose Christians who will listen more than talk. You want people who will facilitate discussion rather than preach their views. It can be good to have someone who has recently come to faith with you in the group. Their excitement for Jesus and understanding of life without God can give them good insights and credibility with others in the group.
- Have clearly defined start and finish times, and stick to these.
- End on a high note. This encourages your busy friends to return next time.
- Make sure you have the discussion in a good environment – warm, free of distractions and interruptions.
- Recruit people to pray for you while you are having your discussions.

Resources

- If you are unsure about what part of the Bible to read, it's always a good idea to start with a Gospel.
- Go to the navigators.org.nz website for extra study resources to help e.g. Mark's Gospel Reading group material, Encounters with Jesus, Jesus I AM statements



6. SUMMARY

Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ... if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? But in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. If they were all one part, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, but one body...

God has put the body together, giving greater honour to the parts that lacked it, so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honoured, every part rejoices with it. Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. - **1 Corinthians 12:12-27**



THINGS TO DO/QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

Go back over the studies in this section and briefly note down the main new things you have learnt or the things you have tried as you have sought to integrate more prayer into your life.

God may have got your attention on one or two things you need to do as a result of going through these studies. Perhaps it is to try some different skills in your small group or to ask some friends to start a small group. Alternatively, it may be to improve in the way you live out the one-anothers or to be more intentional about using your gifts and strengths to build up the Body.

Whatever it is, you will have the best chance of succeeding in these things if you tell someone else about them and, if possible, if you practically plan when you will do these things.

Write these things down somewhere that will help you to act on them!



THOUGHT TO FINISH

It is not good to be alone. God has created us to be in community and he has given each of us a mix of strengths and weaknesses so that we need others and they need us. In the Body of Christ, there are no redundancies; we all have an important contribution to make. We miss out and so do others when we are just consumers; we also need to be contributors. So don't sit back; take the initiative today to do what you can, where you are, with what you've got. And by faith, none of us will be disappointed.

THE NAVIGATORS OF NEW ZEALAND

The Navigators of NZ is a non-profit (and non-denominational) organisation that aims to help people find Good News for their life through the story and life of Jesus. We work with people in the areas of developing character, vision and practical skills so that they can follow Jesus in their everyday world. However, this is never just for their own benefit. We help people with the aim of them going on to also help others. This resource is a valuable tool to help you and others on The Journey.

The Navigators of NZ is also part of an international organisation - The Navigators – which is involved in over 100 countries around the world. If you'd like any more info on this, just make contact with us: info@navigators.org.nz or visit our website listed below.

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